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CHANGES IN ROSS RIVER
DURING THE
ANVIL MINE DEVELOPMENT

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INTRODUCTION

This case study examines the social, economic and political effects which a large scale development - the opening of the Anvil Mine - had upon the residents of Ross River. An examination of this nature hopefully may generate insights into similar consequences which could be expected of other large scale projects.

Ross River was an isolated settlement prior to development of the Anvil Mine. The major events which occurred with Anvil Mine were similar to other large scale developments in that they involved:

1. a large, imported labour force. This occurred for both the construction and operation of the mine;
2. a boom in secondary developments. A rush of mineral exploration accompanied development of the mine;
3. an expansion of the transportation and communications infrastructure to facilitate the initial development and future potential growth. In the Anvil case, this was carried out by the Federal Government as part of its commitment to northern development; and
4. a commitment that local residents would share in the benefits of the developments. Both the mining company and the Federal Government expressed concern that people of the region, particularly Native people, should benefit.

This paper will consider the consequences of each of the processes outlined above and will examine the overall effects Anvil Mine has had upon the people of Ross River. The author was a participant observer of these processes while residing in the community, employed as a school principal.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Indian people of the Ross River and Upper Pelly region shifted from a hunting and gathering economy to a fur trading economy about one hundred and twenty years ago. This shift brought about substantial changes in the pattern of subsistence and social organization. Fur trapping demanded considerable mobility. This usually necessitated the use of dog teams, the feeding of which required more intensive hunting and gathering practices. Trapping areas were exhausted in three to five years and the groups using the area would then move to a more plentiful locale. Posts were visited intermittently to trade furs for hardware and food supplies. Food was purchased to supplement traditional food sources, not to replace them.

Fur trapping required considerable hardware and many major moves. These conditions led to frequent caching or discarding of hardware because of the problems involved in their transportation. Hence, people retained skills in tool making and appear to have placed a lesser value on accumulation of material objects than they do now.

The Ross River Post was built in 1900 at the junction of the Ross and Pelly Rivers. This was the only post, of many in the region, to survive the decline of the fur trade during the late 1940's. Many Indian people built cabins in the vicinity of the post. Lack of firewood and a scarcity of game in the post area meant that people could stay only as long as their food and fuel supplies permitted.

The first white people to settle in Ross River were the managers and operators of the local trading posts. In these positions, white people held the predominant

power as arbiters of the evolving economic and social order. Although Indian people were the principle laborers and white people supported themselves from the fruits of the Indian economy, the prevailing local life style was still based largely on Indian traditions.

The Canol Road

In 1943-44 the Canol Road was built to service the Canol Oil Pipeline, which transported oil from Norman Wells, Northwest Territories, to Whitehorse. The road passed directly through the settlement of Ross River. The oil line operated for a brief period but the road was kept open intermittently until 1952. During the late 1940's and early 1950's salvage operations hauled out much of the pipe and equipment abandoned after the closing of the oil line.

If the beginning of the fur trade is considered the first major change for the Indian people of Ross River, then the Canol line could be considered the starting point of the second set of major changes. These changes increased dependency upon government assistance and wage employment. Government assistance came by way of family allowance, old age and disability pensions and subsistence welfare payments.

These changes did not occur abruptly. People still continued to hunt and trap, but to a lesser extent. However, the role of the government aid and employment income grew in importance as increasing amounts of food supplies and other merchandize were purchased from the store. In order to receive the benefits of employment and government aid, families had to remain near employers and postal services. Under these conditions, a pattern of moving from community to bush and back again was established.

Between 1945 and the early 1950's most of the families of the region settled for longer periods in Ross River. Government assistance, wage employment with pipeline salvage and big game outfitters, and a declining fur market encouraged people to stay in town. Wage employment was almost entirely for the summer season, which allowed men to keep their trapping equipment in good order, accumulate a grubstake and spend the winter in the bush. Even with the low fur prices of the 1950's hunting and trapping was considered to be an economic venture which paid its own way.

With the closing of the Canol Road, fewer jobs were available and postal service became infrequent, making it difficult to get government assistance which came by mail. High prices in the Ross River Post and a poor fur market combined with the above factors led to an exodus of many residents to places along the highway, such as Watson Lake, Whitehorse and Carmacks, where employment and government benefits could be received. Approximately five extended Indian families, two white families, and a priest lived in the settlement between 1955 to 1964. Seasonal visitors and prospectors frequented the community during the summers of this period.

Mining Developments

Discovery, between 1960-1965, of lead, zinc and silver deposits in the Ross River area led to an exploration and staking rush. In the summer of 1962, the Canol Road was reopened to service the mining developments. During this period many white people moved into the settlement to work during the summer, only to leave when winter set in. The Indian people, in turn, moved back into the bush in the winter for hunting and trapping activities. Ross River had become a center from which Indian people organized their activities. There was, however, a core of white residents who stayed

in the community throughout the winter. These people interacted frequently and agreeably, with Indian people. While whites remained a distinct segment of the community, these Indian-white interactions con-
 trasted greatly with the distant and often unfriendly racial climate which developed later in the 1960's.

Many of the people who had moved out of Ross River in the 1950's emigrated back in the early 1960's,

encouraged by rumours of summer employment in mining exploration or with big game outfitters. At this time, many more Indian people also began to establish homes in the settlement. However, wages and government assistance were insufficient to purchase a year's supply of food from the store. Store goods were becoming a larger part of the daily diet, but hunting and trapping were still essential as a supplement to commercial foods. Bush activities were still regarded as the central life style.

By 1966, the rich Anvil ore body, developed by a prospector based in Ross River, was scheduled to become a mine. The Federal Government aided in the development of Anvil mines through the Roads to Resources Program, provision of operation of lands and community services, man-power training and tax benefits. (Anvil Mine Agreement) A road was built from Watson Lake to the minesite, passing by Ross River enroute. An airstrip was built in Ross River and air traffic increased to meet mining exploration demands.

It is reported that the prospector who found the ore body was told of mineral showings by two Indian men in Ross River who felt they should have been the recipients of profits realized when the mine was developed regardless of the development efforts. This has remained as a sensitive concern to both sectors of the settlement.

A boom in Ross River accompanied the increased mining activity. The trading post was changed into a department store; a garage was built; a bar and beer parlour were opened. A motel, a cafe, police station, health clinic, territorial road maintenance garage, a water system, trailer court, a number of new houses, and a school were built in fairly rapid succession.

A number of white people moved into Ross River to take part in the construction of the mine. The mine was scheduled to be constructed by single labour and single men's accommodation only were provided at the mine site. Married men who wished to work on the construction, yet still have their families nearby, moved into Ross River. A number of white entrepreneurs and government agencies also moved into town during this same period.

The influx of outsiders and business enterprises between 1966 and 1975 generated many dramatic changes for the Indian people and the small, but expanding white segment of Ross River. The Indians did not share financially to any significant extent in the economic developments; however, they were to feel other consequences of the boom in the community and in the region.

The balance of this paper will examine some specific impacts related to the overall mining project on the Indian community at Ross River.

I. LABOUR FORCE

Four different labour forces have been drawn into the region since the beginning of the mining boom. A crew of about 500 men were employed in the construction phase of Anvil mine. Exploration activities employed between 100 and 200 men during summer seasons. The operation of Anvil Mine employed between 400 and 500 with an additional 80 to 100 employed in transporting

the ore. The government service sector has employed about 50 people in the Ross River-Faro area and an additional 20 people outside the region. Each of these labour forces acted independently of the others, but this was not always the case.

Construction Phase

The construction of Anvil Mine and the townsite, Faro, was undertaken by "Parsons", a general contractor, with the major construction beginning in 1966. The general contractors sublet many aspects of the project to other firms. Each firm, contracting a specific function, began with a core of men whom they had hired previously in the south. Further employment of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled labour was managed by either the general contractor in conjunction with the government employment service or by the specific subcontractors.

Accommodation and board provided at the mine site were intended for single men only. The prefab bunkhouses located at the mine site housed about 400 men. A commissary provided meals. All of the basic necessities were provided; however, there were limited diversions from the job after the shift was over. Card games appear to have been the main passtime of the men who lived in the camp. Movies were shown two or three times weekly in a warehouse which had been converted into a theatre. There were no liquor outlets, bars or hotels at the camp during the first two years of the construction phase. Most of the contractors worked a six-day week with Sundays off.

Almost all of the construction workers came from outside of the Territory. Throughout the entire construction period approximately 15 Indian men from Ross River were employed in the project. No members of the

original white community obtained construction employment at the mine site. The imported labour was generally a transient group moving from one major project to the next. Many came from the completed Hudson-Hope Dam Project to work at Anvil. Men stayed at the site for periods ranging from an hour to a few years. Some men left their jobs and remained in the area on their own, but most were taken back to the southern centres where they had initially been hired. The crews were generally quiet and job-oriented; however, in a group of 500 isolated men, there were a significant number of exceptions to the rule.

Although the construction was to be undertaken by single males, some married men arranged accommodations for their families in Ross River. These employees lived in the bunkhouses during the week and commuted by car or truck to Ross River on Saturday nights. They would spend the Saturday night and Sunday with their wives and families and return to the mine site for Monday morning shift. This involved as many as ten families and as few as three throughout the construction phase. When these men left the job they held at the construction site, they either left Ross River with their families or they remained in Ross River to seek employment with the government service sector, private businesses or mining exploration companies.

This pattern meant that the dependents of construction workers were virtually tied to the settlement. For these people, confinement to the community frequently became a difficult strain to bear. None of these newcomers were related to the people who lived in Ross River. There were marked differences in attitude and mentality between the recent arrivals and the community's longer term residents. Almost all of the new arrivals

came from southern centres. To them, the structure and ambience of the older community were incomprehensible. Furthermore, in the accelerated tempo which accompanied the boom, the established character of the community, as it had been, was seldom appreciated by them if it was considered at all.

There appear to be three reasons for the newcomers' failure to recognize the character of the community into which they moved. The families moving into Ross River during this period were swept up in an unsettled and unestablished white community. The rapid expansion of the town's white population did not allow sufficient time for the development of an overall social order. Yet a great deal of time and effort was spent on the part of the white community in attempting to covertly and overtly establish some sense of order to that segment of the settlement. With these concerns preoccupying the white community little effort was made to understand how the community had previously functioned.

Secondly, construction workers and their families generally aspired to a life style characterized by amenities such as urban services. Their efforts were toward these ends, without considering how such services would alter directly and indirectly, the community's character and how this would affect established residents.

Lastly, and probably most significantly, these families generally found Indian ways incomprehensible. There was an off-hand rejection of becoming a part of a bicultural community if that alternative was ever considered, and it is doubtful that the idea of fitting into the framework of the Indian community was ever entertained. Few had any previous contact with Indian people and most had stereotyped Indians in a manner that was at best, uncomplimentary. G. Miller(1971)

describes a number of incidents which support this contention. During the three years I resided in Ross River, the stereotyping of Indian people appeared to be the rule rather than the exception. Few of the whites in the settlement took the opportunity to know Indian people on an individual basis.

With these conditions prevailing, the settlement became further factioined. The white sector of the settlement gravitated into three loosely knit, fluid groups: the old-timers, the government personnel and the mining construction fraternity. The Indian community was also breaking into factors, with the Indian Affairs Branch lending increasing weight to the differentiating between status and non-status Indians, and with the arrival of a number of Indian people from different communities and different linguistic groupings.

During the late 1960's the atmosphere of the community was both exciting and unsettling. By 1975 much had settled. The temporary construction phase came to a conclusion and the transient workers had moved on with their families. Time has allowed some order to be realized in the white sector of the community. The Indian sector of the settlement has been drawn together as greater understanding of band management and political means have been gained. The unifying discussions on land claims have done a great deal to draw this sector of the settlement closer together.

Over the past seven years, Indian people have been changing in response to the kinds of attitudes and behaviours described above. While it has not been the families of the construction workers alone that have brought about these responses, they were party to establishing the social and economic framework which influenced subsequent events in the settlement.

Almost every aspect of the Ross River Indians' life style has felt the impact of changing conditions. Some of these changes the Indians regarded as beneficial, some as detrimental. Whatever the character of the changes accompanying the development, one thing was abundantly clear: the conditions which gave rise to change were not controlled nor appreciably influenced by the Indian people.

White people moving into Ross River brought with them urban attitudes and behaviours. The store, responding to their requests began to handle a wider range of merchandise such as stylish clothes, gadgets, hardware, fancy and quick preparation foods and other outside articles.

Concerned that they might be missing out on something in some undefined, obscure way, many Indian people (primarily the younger generation) began to purchase the same kinds of articles. Functional value was frequently secondary in importance to style. Spending their limited funds on these items meant difficulties later in providing for basic needs.

The construction families, along with other white residents, introduced many new patterns of social interaction. The Community Club, established to administer community affairs and functions, was foreign to the Indian people. Demands were placed upon them to select leaders and to participate in community affairs. When Indian people failed to respond appropriately to the bewildering situation, they were unintentionally made to feel uncomfortable and unwelcome at the meetings. Almost all stopped attending the meetings and the management of community affairs fell to the white residents. This was to become a source of some resentment and bitterness later on.

The children of the Anvil construction workers attended the school which opened in 1966. The student population, between 1966 and 1969, was composed of about 80 Indian children, and 4 to 12 non-Indian children. The majority of the non-Indian parents desired that the school offer the same course of studies as could be found in the urban areas, so that their children would not lose out on schooling when they moved. There was resistance to school programming designed to overcome problems endemic to schools in predominately Indian communities. The point was clearly made to the Indian people that the minority transient white people exercised considerable control over the education of Indian children.

While the children of all sectors of the settlement mixed easily, in most cases there was little contact between white and Indian adults within the community of Ross River. The only situation which provided common grounds for contacts between adults, aside from the store, was the bar. It was in the bar that many different groups of people congregated. Indian people generally sat together with some movement from table to table among themselves. The white people generally broke into two groups. On Saturday nights the married construction workers would frequently spend the evening in the bar with their wives and the single men who came down from the mine site. The other white people (government personnel, entrepreneurs and those involved in mining exploration), would generally group together. Saturday evening would see quite a few of the single construction men from Anvil coming to Ross River for "a bit of action". The bar and the presence of women in Ross River attracted men to the settlement.

They would arrive in Ross River early Saturday evening and go to the bar in hopes of "some action". This action included drinks, fights, sexual encounters with women and girls, or all of these if the night was particularly eventful, as many were. Liquor was always present. It facilitated open conflicts and hostilities and it was used as an inducement for sexual encounters. G. Miller refers to fights in his report:

"... The Natives report that from time to time they are brutally beaten by whites in town. From my direct observations I have concluded that violence between whites and Indians, particularly when the latter have been drinking, is a rather common occurrence. However, in nearly all cases, it is the whites who are the aggressors, and it is the Natives who are the losers."

My observations support those of Miller. However, the Indian people were losers, not only in the fights, but in the whole scheme of things. The climate of drunkenness, beatings, sexual exploitation and frustration at being incapable of altering these conditions, led Indian people into more frequent violent acts among themselves.

The presence of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police illustrates this situation. The first detachment opened in 1966 with the construction boom. This was changed from a one-man to a two-man detachment in 1969 as a result of a considerable increase in the amount of police work required both locally and at the mine site.

This climate of hostility appears to have tempered between 1971 to 1975. This may be the result of the alcohol-related deaths of a large number of Indian people or a growing awareness and rejection of such behaviour by the white community or possibly for other reasons. While the mechanisms may not be clearly understood, there has been a quietening in the overall style of community living.

Throughout the construction period, Anvil Mine Corporation attempted to minimize some of the negative effects which the construction phase had on Ross River by attempting to provide some employment opportunities to men from the community. Movies were loaned to Ross River in a gesture of goodwill. Workers were asked to avoid conflicts and problems, and management representatives visited Ross River to smooth ruffled feathers.

However, it appears that the good intentions of the Corporation and the government were of less consequence than the interactions between their employees and the Indians of Ross River, or than the attitudes of some of their men toward employing or working with Indians (and conversely the attitudes of Indian people toward working at Anvil). There were no specific stipulations about employee behaviour or employment of local residents during the construction phase of the mine. If there had been, it is doubtful these would have had any significant effect in avoiding most difficulties. The comments of construction workers, clearly indicated that they would find their good times on their own time, time which the company had no rights over.

This section of the paper has touched upon some of the consequences of the influx of mine construction personnel. This is not to suggest that those employed in the mine construction were the sole influence on the community. During the same time span, and as a result of the mining developments, many other groups were to make impacts upon Ross River.

II LABOUR FORCES IN RELATED DEVELOPMENTS

Mineral Exploration

The discovery and development of the rich Anvil ore body led to a staking rush in the region. Almost all of the forty miles between Ross River and Anvil, as well as about forty miles downstream were staked. The whole of the Tintina Fault area became subject to extensive scrutiny.

Three to five different exploration companies operated out of Ross River during the summers of 1965 to 1969. These companies conducted exploration programs utilizing geologists, prospectors, pilots, chemists, lab technicians and university students to work throughout the summer. The prospectors and pilots were generally hired from within the Territory. The activity about Ross River enticed a small charter aircraft business to become established and two or three prospectors to settle permanently in the community. Indians were often hired as prospectors, assistant prospectors or line cutters. Exploration companies said that they preferred to hire Indian men because they were "bush wise"; they were less likely to get "bushed" or lost or to split a shin with an axe than were people from the outside.

The relationships between the exploration crews and the Indians were usually relaxed and cordial. Indian men were recognized for their abilities and strengths in the bush rather than for their behaviour in the bar.

Generally, the imported exploration labour spent only the summers in the area and would exhibit considerable tolerance for Indian people who had been drinking, after weeks in the bush. This tolerance decreased with the increased familiarity brought with seasonal returns to the community and with the increased identification with the white sector of the community which was polarized against the Indians.

Quite a few Indian men and some of the white construction workers sought and accepted positions with exploration crews. Assistant prospecting was the preferred job. After a couple of seasons working for companies that paid a bonus for the discovery of a showing, these men began to feel that they too should be working for prospector's wages. They were often finding more showings than the prospectors they were assisting. In order to become prospectors they had to pass a prospecting test administered in Whitehorse. The fact that a test had to be written and that it had to be done in Whitehorse deterred men from becoming prospectors. The more lucrative jobs were not open or acceptable to the Indian men. Most of the white men however, did have other trades or skills they were able to fall back upon.

In 1969, the Yukon Territorial Government, Department of Vocational Education, was approached about offering a prospectors' training program in Ross River. The course was set up in 1970 sponsored by the Yukon Territorial Government and Canada Manpower. Approximately 25 men took the course and all that wrote the prospectors' exam passed with honours. It is ironic that the season these men should qualify as prospectors was a slow one for exploration. Very few could find positions and all were limited in the work they could do on their own. All who had worked for large exploration companies had signed agreements stating that they would not prospect for a three-year period in areas which they had prospected for their previous employers. Quite a few men expressed regret for having shown exploration firms the mineral deposits they had noticed at earlier times. The training was worthwhile for some, however. Four or five people in Ross River have developed and sold properties they have discovered.

While the mining exploration crews were in the field, expeditors were located in Ross River to assure that the needs of the camps were met. There were also two temporary assay labs operating in town during the summers of 1966 to 1969. These firms would employ one or two local people as lab assistants.

The direct impact which the people involved in mineral exploration exerted upon the Indian sector of the settlement was limited because of three factors:

1. most families moved out of town as soon as school holidays began, even if the men were employed elsewhere;
2. the people involved in exploration activities were generally out of town and when they were around the town, it was almost deserted; and
3. the employment offered to local men drew upon skills they possessed rather than demanding extensive retraining and relocation.

The mineral exploration activity however, did have a considerable effect upon the white sector of the settlement. Indirectly, all of the local business and services were heavily dependent upon mineral exploration in the area. The extent of summer activity appears to have kept businesses in the settlement solvent during the rest of the year.

Local Entrepreneurs

The boom in the mining business and the construction of a road network opened a number of opportunities for entrepreneurs in Ross River. The Post expanded to supply the summer exploration crews, and meet the demands for a wider range of supplies requested by the new white residents. In 1967, a bar and motel were set

up in a group of connected trailers. A cafe, garage, trailer court, charter aircraft company, a second store and a Band Sawmill Co-op were set up during the same period. Most of these businesses were either owned or managed by white people who had moved into Ross River since 1966.

Entrepreneurs made substantial investments in the community and, consequently, they regarded themselves as being less mobile. These people were generally strong-willed individualists who undertook their tasks with considerable spirit and energy. Almost all were initially generous of their time and resources to help in community affairs, and thought of themselves as the permanent residents who established the community. They desired to improve the community and they were instrumental in having a number of services and amenities provided to the settlement.

These people demonstrated considerable strengths and flexibilities in the face of two difficulties. Throughout the period between 1966 and 1969, there was substantial doubt on the part of Territorial and Federal Governmental agencies that the community of Ross River would continue to exist after the construction of Faro was completed. All governmental installations with the exception of the road maintenance garage were portable structures. They were designed to be moved with the anticipated exodus to Faro. The businessmen who located in Ross River supported the community in the face of the anticipated collapse of the settlement.

The second condition facing the new business people was that almost all other white residents in the community were also newcomers. No defined social patterns had been established. The absence of a decipherable social

structure was the source of considerable confusion and conflict among the white people in the settlement. This situation led to the rapid typing of people into broad categories so that an individual could determine with whom he could associate comfortably. A white person could not stay in two camps. If he befriended Indians, he was accepted by some and rejected by others. This condition of "either you are for us or against us" increased the separation between Indians and whites.

The political development of the settlement's residents paralleled the growth of the community as it kept abreast of changes. Most of the white residents had some previous experience in community government and political action. They were able to use this knowledge to form a Community Association in 1966 and work toward some common community goals. The Indian residents had no such prior knowledge or experiences. The Department of Indian Affairs had established a Chief and Council in 1966, but these individuals did not have any clear idea of their functions or roles. (McDonnel, 1975) Community affairs passed the Indians by during the late 1960's. The white residents interpreted the lack of Indian participation as an indifference which failed to support, and at times obstructed, their efforts towards what they saw as the betterment of the settlement.

In 1969, the Yukon Native Brotherhood was created. One of its first acts was to establish management training programs for band members. Bands became cognizant of their political situation as well as how it could be changed. Many band members viewed their inadvertent exclusion from the white community with bitterness. Most of the long-term white residents had

been their friends prior to the boom. With the boom, these people stopped associating with their Indian acquaintances of the past. Exclusion from part of the community and the feeling of being spurned by old friends led Indian people to respond in kind as they began to develop political and managerial skills.

Most white entrepreneurs operated on the basis of the unquestioned assumption that the introduction of urban amenities and services were for the betterment of the community. This assumption was accepted with such conviction that many Indian people also accepted the proposition unquestioningly. These decisions carried many unanticipated changes. For example, television appears to have contributed to a marked change in physical fitness and ability to withstand cold. This unanticipated effect has led to a reduction in a hunter's ability.

The services and amenities that were established in the community reflected white biases. The water line was located only in the white sector of the settlement. A stand pipe, linked with the water line provided the source of water for Indian and some white residents. The roads in the white part of the community were gravelled and well maintained in the winter while those in the Indian sector were neither gravelled nor maintained in winter. The proceeds from all movies shown in the community went into the Community Association coffers even though it was primarily Indian people who attended the shows. The British Columbia curriculum was taught in the school and deviations from this curriculum were discouraged by white residents.

The road system was used predominantly by white residents. In 1967, there were no Indian people in Ross River who owned vehicles, although many hired the taxi to go to camps out of town. All non Indian families owned at least one vehicle, commonly a pick-up. Air service, and all that it entailed, was available to all in case of emergency.

All government institutions were built within the white sector of the community prior to 1972. Public lands in the vicinity of the settlement were surveyed, zoned and subdivided. Generous allocations were made for future expansion of the non Indian immigrants. Land could be leased or purchased from Whitehorse through a process familiar to most white residents, but unfamiliar to most Indian people. The allocation of the Land Reserve for Indian Use restricted the services which could be located in the Indian sector of the community. While there may have been sound political and economic reasons for locating some services where they did, the one-sided effect was clearly recognized by the Indians and construed to be inequitable.

Government Labour Force

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Department of Territorial Engineering, Yukon Forest Services and Public Health constructed facilities employed eight people initially, increasing to 13 permanent employees by 1969. Two-thirds of these people were married with families. They were more transient than most of those who had established businesses in the settlement. Most stayed a year or two before moving. However, two or three remained as long as seven or eight years. Subsidized accommodations were provided for the government personnel who lived in Ross River.

Because of the short periods of residency, few government service personnel created lasting individual impressions upon the settlement. However, the services provided have resulted in some irreversible changes which will be discussed later. The people who delivered the social services were in close contact with Indian residents on a daily basis. Some of these people attempted to adapt the service they rendered so that it more closely met Indian needs while others appear to have tried to adapt the needs of the Indians to suit the service. Some government employees fit in well, others not so well. Some responded with more sensitivity to one sector than another. Others attempted to be sensitive to both.

There were a few local employment opportunities with the government agencies. Those which were available were generally taken by local whites who already had the required skills. Indian men were employed with the Territorial Government Engineering Department when it required one or two labourers over the summer months. The school employed an Indian to do custodial work. The major employer of Indian people was the Yukon Forest Service. From five to twenty men, most of whom were Indian, would be employed for fire fighting during times when there were many forest fires. Northern Health Services employed an Indian person as a community health worker. In 1970, there were only two Ross River Indians permanently employed by government agencies.

Mine Labour Force

The day Anvil Mine went into production was not noteworthy in Ross River. Some of the construction workers living in Ross River had moved; others had elected to remain in the community, some with the mining

company, some with private business or mineral exploration, some with government services, and some with occasional odd jobs. Most of the people who were to move to Faro had moved by this time.

By 1969, a shopping centre, recreation centre, bar and hotel opened in Faro. About 200 families were living in apartments and the balance of the mine labour force, about 200 single men, lived in bunkhouses located in Faro. The improved services in Faro meant less frequent visits to Ross River. This resulted in a decrease in the kinds of exploitation of the community discussed earlier. However, this new mine labour force exploited other resources which also resulted in difficulties to the Indians of Ross River.

The family people who moved into Faro were required to provide food for their families. Food was not provided as it had been for the single men. Many of these people hunted to supplement their food supply. Hunting almost always meant driving along a road in hopes of intercepting big game. A food source which had previously been supplying Ross River exclusively was now being utilized by Faro as well. This has meant a decline in the number of animals taken by people in Ross River. The Indian people of the settler felt this loss more than the white residents because game meat represented a greater proportion of their total diet. Hunting and game meat has a social significance to the Indian that is of neither the same kind or importance to most of white society. People in Ross River have indicated that increased hunting pressures from vehicles drove the game back some distance from the road. This meant not only less game but less likelihood of sighting game at old haunts. (The influence of the road network on hunting patterns will be discussed in detail below).

Since the settlement of families and the development of recreational activities in Faro, the interactions between the people of Ross River and Faro have changed considerably. There have been frequent hockey and baseball games between the two settlements. The teams from Ross River consist of a cross-section of people, indicating a development cohesiveness in certain areas of interaction. Hockey and baseball practices and games have been a medium in which all sectors of the community participate. Unlike curling, these activities have drawn parts of the settlement together.

RELATED DEVELOPMENTS AND EXPLORATION

The expansion of business and services in Ross River and the construction of the transportation system can be attributed to active mining exploration and to the development of Anvil Mine. Without the building of the mine these developments would probably not have occurred or if they did, they would have been much delayed and more gradually implemented. The mine development also gave rise to the accelerated exploration in the region.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENTS IN ROSS RIVER

The post expanded, first to a small store, then to a department store. Between 1967 and 1973, five different people purchased and managed the store. All but one of these people came into Ross River with families and all but two left the community. People sold the store for various reasons: poor management, inability to meet debts, personal difficulties, conflict with the community, an interest in different ventures, or a desire to move along.

A change of store owners resulted in some confusion. Each new manager had to be sounded out about credit extension, fur-buying and grubstaking. Store management required a considerable knowledge of each individual in order to be able to deal with these business matters appropriately. A pattern was established with each new owner -- initially there was a fairly relaxed and friendly credit policy, except for those carrying large debts. In the face of some Indians running up very large debts, which could not be paid, and the opinions presented by other white people of the settlement about the fiscal irresponsibilities of the Indians, credit quickly became more restrictive. Easy credit was a novel experience for many Indians, and some had run up crippling debts before they realized how to manage the new situation. The new store managers not only had to cope with this situation, they too were busy finding a niche for themselves in the settlement. This was often a disquietening process.

The bar-motel complex is the business which appears to have had greatest impact upon Ross River. It provided a ready outlet for liquor. Whether this was a major cause of the many drinking problems may be debated, but that it facilitated drinking and the related difficulties cannot be questioned. The bar was also the major social-recreational centre in the settlement. It became the focal point for many community activities and it also became the focal point for many of the drink-related problems. A visit to the settlement graveyard makes this point more clearly. All but one or two of the deaths in the settlement over the past ten years, have been alcohol related; most have been violent and many have involved young people.

The opening of the school in Ross River affected Indians in two different ways. It unintentionally placed an additional economic burden upon families with school-aged children who had previously been in residential school. The families simply had to provide for more people. It tied families with school-aged children to the settlement during the school term. This restricted fall, winter and spring hunting and trapping for these families and was an additional pressure which required Indians to purchase an increasing part of their food supply from the store.

CO-OP SAW MILL

The Band Council of Ross River established a Co-op Saw Mill in 1966. The Co-op operated for three years, two of which were at a loss. Miller (1972) examined this situation and found that three factors led to the failure of the Co-op. These were:

1. the managers' training program was not effectively reaching the Indian trainees. No one was sufficiently trained to take over the management of the Co-op;
2. Anvil did not purchase the anticipated amount of lumber, logs and beams;
3. the Band did not feel that they owned or controlled the Co-op and their commitment to the operation was reduced.

During its short period of operation, the Saw Mill employed between five and fourteen men. The mill was situated thirty miles out of the settlement toward Anvil so that people had to relocate in order to work there. This was the only major Band venture of this period and, when it failed, it produced considerable discouragement for the Native community.

Businesses operated by the white sector of the community, in general, fared somewhat better. Persons operating these businesses exhibited the capacity to expand and contract their operations in order to capitalize on the summer booms. As a consequence, slumps in the community's economy were accommodated with few disasters.

MINERAL EXPLORATION ACTIVITIES

Some of the influences on Ross River from mineral activity have already been mentioned. In addition to the seasonal jobs available in exploration, which generated local income, and the impact from the influx of outside workers, another consequence of increased exploration activity was that a network of tote roads provided easier access to various parts of the surrounding country, opening up new areas for hunting by vehicle. Much over-hunting occurred and game became scarce where it had once been abundant. The exploration companies purchased a large part of their food and camp supplies from the Ross River stores. This boom in income allowed the store owners to stock a wider range of goods and to sustain themselves through the quiet winter months.

The presence of the exploration companies also generated and sustained considerable interest in mineral exploration by local people who carried out their own occasional prospecting in hopes of hitting it rich. Hunting trips also involved prospecting as a person walked across the terrain. A few showings were discovered in this manner. This interest in prospecting also led to the mining exploration training program discussed earlier.

III TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Road Network

The reopening of the South Canol Road in 1962, the completion of the Robert Campbell Highway in 1968, and the reopening of the North Canol Road to the Northwest Territories border, placed Ross River at the hub of a road network. The road network was another of the mixed blessings which accompanied Anvil's growth.

Increased access meant cheaper freight rates on commodities, better health care in emergency cases, opportunities to visit other communities, much greater ease in reaching bush camps, an extended hunting range, more accessible winter wood supply, increased employment opportunities and more accessible government services and assistance. Year-round road access also greatly aided the continued operation of many of the businesses in town.

While these factors may generally have been considered benefits, other factors were regarded as disadvantages by many Indian people in Ross River. With the roads came traffic deaths, in particular, tragedies which were alcohol-related. Increased access led to a greater movement of people from outside into the settlement, both on a permanent and transient basis. This disrupted established social interaction and increased inter-racial tension. Over-hunting adjacent to the roads led to game depletion. Exploration bush camps were located close to roads bringing increased movements between camps and town, and the problems associated with transient workers going to town to "have a good time". Indian bush camps also became situated closer to roads, altering the traditional movement and life-style patterns. The increase in Indian vehicle ownership, from 1967, when no Indian owned a vehicle, to 1974, when ten cars were owned, testifies to the increased use and dependency upon the road network. And the fact that all white families owned vehicles during this period,

showed clearly to all the economic and social differences and disparities between the two segments of the community.

Airstrip

The airstrip, built in the mid 1960's as part of the Remote Communities Emergency Airstrip Program, provided a valuable infrastructure to mining interests for exploration activities along the Tintina Fault, as well as servicing the needs of the mine itself. Similar settlements did not receive comparable packages. The strip was used for weekly scheduled flights and for intermittent mining related business. The strip was also used for emergency medical evacuations to Whitehorse and for fire-bombing operations.

The airstrip gave rise to an aircraft charter business in the settlement. This service, coupled with the other local mining activity, the availability of other required goods and services and year-found road access, provided a further incentive to exploration firms and individuals to operate out of the settlement. Over time, this tendency has added a degree of economic stability to the community and its businesses. The exact location of the airstrip has posed difficulties for Indians in Ross River, however. The road, the river and the airstrip have surrounded Indian lands, thereby limiting possible Indian community expansion and development.

COMMUNICATIONS

Telephones were connected to "outside" lines, in 1970. Prior to that, all communications outside of the settlement were conducted via radio telephones. The

installation of outside lines coincided with the Yukon Native Brotherhood's Band training programs. The phone was used frequently by the Band as they began to draw upon the knowledge, experience and political authority of the Yukon Native Brotherhood. Thus, the phones aided Bands a great deal in their own development. Outside telephone connections aided local businesses in providing swifter and more efficient service to customers. Mining and exploration operations in particular made considerable use of phones in conducting their business.

IV NATIVE EMPLOYMENT AT ANVIL

In 1967, the Federal Government and Anvil Mine signed "The Anvil Agreement" which set terms and conditions for the construction and operation of the mine. In the second phase, there were several stipulations regarding local hire.

Section Three, Subsection Two reads:

"(2) During the second stage Anvil will,

- a. Subject to subsection three (employ competent local residents, particularly Indians and Eskimos, to the extent of at least five per cent of the total number of employees within the first year, rising to ten per cent within the second year, and 25 per cent in the fifth year, after the mine comes into production; and

- b. institute a training program for supervisors and foremen to insure compliance with the undertakings set forth in paragraph (a) of this subsection.

While this section may have been fulfilled for the first two years, it appears that this stipulation has

not been complied with beyond that time. Several factors have made compliance difficult; however, the mine does not appear to have seriously attempted to overcome them.

During 1970 and 1971, about five different Indian men from Ross River worked with Anvil. Three of these men worked for only a short period of time. They all indicated that they did not like the work at the mine. Most jobs were dusty and depressing. All of the men were unskilled and were given tasks which did not require skills or involve skill training. Many difficulties for these men arose after hours. They were separated from friends and relatives and placed in unfamiliar accommodations. Some Indians set up tent frames and cabins near the mine to overcome this situation, but the company discouraged this type of arrangement. Drinking after hours frequently added to social adjustment problems as well. Such factors discouraged many Indians from staying with their jobs.

All of these men returned to Ross River after leaving their jobs. Other men in the town, hearing them speak of their difficulties with this work, did not seek employment with the mine. Instead, most Indian men sought out short-term employment which would allow them to return to other pursuits such as hunting and trapping, which, while less profitable, were more satisfying to them.

Among long-term white residents of Ross River, few sought or obtained employment at the mine. Some workers, who participated in the construction phase (while their families lived in Ross River), took jobs at the mine permanently and moved their families to the Faro townsites.

From the standpoint of Ross River residents, then, the Anvil Agreement was of little relevance. Pledges to have locals, and in particular Indians, were of no lasting consequence. Neither the types of permanent jobs nor the other circumstances of employment appealed to Indian men. Apparently, little thought was given by the company to the lack of preparedness of local people to step into mine jobs.

There were no discernable training programs which could have provided these skills. There was little, if any, consideration given to local cultural, community or family needs in relation to housing and accommodation, social inter-action or recreational pursuits. Neither was much attention given to the nature of racial tensions and prejudice which occurred during employment time and after hours. With such conditions being largely ignored, the terms of the Agreement could not practically be implemented and the company failed to live up to its promises.

OVERVIEW

The dramatic and rapid juxtaposition of western culture on the isolated Indian settlement of Ross River resulted in shifts in the economic and social fabric of the community. Along with the mining development, there was a resultant boom in Ross River. The influx of government employees, white entrepreneurs, and mineral exploration personnel brought to the settlements the trappings of western culture.

The question arises as to whether the Indian people of Ross River would have undergone changes of the same order and magnitude if the mining development had not occurred. To answer this question, it is necessary to compare the changes which occurred over a given time period with the changes in similar communities which were not subject to developments of similar types and scale.

It should be noted that the rate of change and the mechanisms of change are just as important to investigate as the changes themselves.

There were few permanent employment opportunities in Ross River for Indians throughout the boom. There was, however, an increase in the number of seasonal and part-time jobs available, which did provide Indians with more cash. The increased income was not, in most instances, sufficient to provide for all the necessities without being supplemented by hunting. Money, which had previously gone into the purchase of basic food supplies and necessary equipment, was spread over a wider range of merchandize. During this same period, the opening of the local school had the effect of keeping parents with school-aged children tied to the settlement. The combination of restricted movement and a change in consumer patterns would have created hardships had it not been for government intervention. (McDonnell) Government agencies provided welfare and winter works projects which forestalled pending difficulties.

The summer employment of Indian men and the restriction on the movement of parents with school children resulted in two significant changes. There were considerably different groupings in bush camps. Men with school-aged children could leave their families in town and hunt. However, this led to difficulties leaving wife and children in town with its attendant drinking, fighting and the inundation of miners and construction workers, was an unsettling thought for many men. The knowledge of government aid was a further deterrent to their going into the bush. During the summers most families would move to bush camps. This was frequently done without the male providers who had obtained summer employment. A camp without hunters was

required to rely more on food supplies purchased from the store. Those couples without school children could still camp a large part of the season. However, other changes meant that these people, as well, became more tied to town. There was a decline in the use of the bush, and in addition, there was a loss of skills related to hunting and trapping. Most children were in school during the age when they would have been taught these skills.

The attractions and distractions associated with living in the settlement had multiplied and become more confusing throughout the boom. Visiting, drinking, the store and the school were all, at times, considered attractions, but gossiping, drunkenness, sexual exploitation, conflicts and violence, lack of funds, and the feeling of being tied down were all part of the disadvantages of the enlarged settlement.

The bush also offered attractions and distractions. However, the bush camp had become an uneconomic venture when weighed against employment and government aid available in town. These conditions gave rise to a change in the pattern of land utilization. Camp sites were selected largely for their accessibility to town so that people could move back and forth with ease.

The shift to a more sedentary style of existence is reflected in the following table from R. McDonnell.

The socially negative aspects which developed in the settlement left lasting impressions upon many. Combinations of drinking, open conflicts, violence, sexual exploitation, and an array of frantic attempts to adjust to a sedentary lifestyle aided in the disintegration of some marriages. Other factors, which will be discussed later, also contributed to marital breakdown. Increased use of vehicles, along with a more sedentary lifestyle, meant the abandonment of dogs. As a consequence, the option of establishing bush camps some distance from a road was no longer available. Not only had dog teams been abandoned, but much of the equipment used in a mobile hunting pattern has also been abandoned. There is no longer the need to travel light with a pickup truck available. Nor was there the demand to cache or discard articles because they couldn't be carried along. Shifts have occurred toward the acquisition and accumulation of material goods. This shift has been partially induced by the patterns of consumption of the white residents.

The increase in value placed upon material goods has created other difficulties. Obvious differences in the amount and kinds of material acquisitions have been a growing source of resentment between white and Indian segments. Poorer housing, fewer vehicles, less income and fewer local employment opportunities have all been visible differences. Assessing these differences as inequities rather than reflections of different and distinct cultures is an indication of the Indian's shift to acquiring the white urban, acquisitive values.

Housing, provided by Indian Affairs and Northern Development and the Yukon Territorial Government, resulted in a number of unforeseen changes. The government-provi-

Profile of Some Recent Changes in the Life Styles of the Indians of Ross River 1967 & 1974

Household Incomes		Households Spending Sept - Dec in Bush		Transportation Mode		Housing	
1967	Tents 11 Houses 18	Bush Camp 13 Town 16	\$120-250/mo 12 Less 17	Dogteams 21 Cars - Snowmobiles 1	Bush Camp 21 Town -	1967	Tents 11 Houses 18
1974	Tents 1 Houses 32	Bush Camp 3 Town 30	\$120-600/mo 30 Less 3	Dogteams 5 Cars 10	Bush Camp 5 Town 10	1974	Tents 1 Houses 32

*NOTE: This understates the amount of building. A number of houses had been town down, and four were low-cost rental-purchase houses.

housing was another form of assistance. Before the boom period, each domestic group provided for their own housing and camp supplies. Government intervention in housing has removed a responsibility people have previously managed on their own. Government housing was allocated on the basis of nuclear families, with preference generally being given to larger family groups. McDonnell (1975) points out that the nuclear family was not a functioning unit of organization for the Indian people of Ross River. The housing programs had the effect of creating new patterns of domestic organization while disrupting the old.

In the bush setting, a camp generally consisted of a domestic grouping. There was a free sharing of resources among the members of the group. This situation has changed somewhat with increased living in town. The town meant more exposure to more people and a consequent increase in demands for aid. The house acted as a barrier which could allow the individual to avoid these continual demands. A tent offered no such barrier. Furthermore, the house was instrumental in developing social insularity. Increased contacts with many different people were often difficult to manage. Avoidance was a common way of dealing with the problem. Locking the door was one way of avoiding exchange with selected individuals. In this sense the house acted to forestall possible problems but also created new problems.

The separation of domestic groups into nuclear families, largely because of housing considerations, had the effect of placing a much greater strain on husband-wife relationships. In the larger domestic group, there were others to help cope with a variety of functions. In the nuclear family, these demands fell to the couple entirely, with the frequent result being anger and frustration. A couple's drinking bout was, to the child, a

more frightening experience than it had been when people were living in larger domestic groups. Infidelity, particularly those instances involving miners, construction workers, and other white people, became much more difficult issues with which to contend. The nuclear family has not the same latitude in coping with this and many other kinds of transgressions. There has also been a shift in the sexual division of labour. Men had previously been providers; now women, through government aid or employment, are often the major income earners in the household. The situation has created confusion and insecurity for the men of many families. The outcome of these events has been the disintegration of some marriages and some rather frantic attempts to preserve the harmony previously found in domestic groups.

It is difficult to convey, in writing, the cultural and emotion intensity and disruption brought on by these changes for which Indians in Ross River were so unprepared. McDonnell (1975) refers to this climate as one in which there is a "creative mix of idioms" and a "general, and in the face of innumerable failures, a rather frantic inventiveness that was and still is occurring in Ross River." This occasionally leads to the "desperation and sense of futility" that periodically seems to envelop many people in contemporary times. The changes which have occurred have not "...jelled to the extent that there now exists a commonly recognized way of establishing social boundaries of inclusion and exclusion in the ambience of town life." (McDonnell)

The climate of unrest and uncertainty has provided some benefits to the Ross River Indians. The polarization in the settlement has aided the Band council in becoming politically and economically aware. It has be-

easier to develop these skills in an arena of clearly defined adversaries. The Band council has opened a Co-op store, and purchased a large truck. Some Band members are now bidding on private contracts. The Band council has outlined a development plan for their members. On the whole, Indian people are beginning to assert their role as participating members of the community. Their actions are forcing many white people to reappraise the role of Indians in the community.

These changes have taken place with such intensity and speed that Indian residents of Ross River found themselves immersed in circumstances which they had neither anticipated nor chosen. Confusion about community and personal values, expectations and behaviour, made alternatives difficult to define and chose among, if any choice, indeed, was possible. The times were viewed as chaotic by most Indians and the resulting stress was often debilitating. Choices were made and actions taken with only very partial understanding of their likely consequences. Freedom of choice and personal initiative and responsibility were seriously limited by this confusion and lack of understanding of where they, their community and their culture were headed.

The rate of change which was drastically accelerated by the mining and related developments has led the Indian community in different directions than would otherwise have been the case if these changes had occurred over a longer period of time. Of particular importance is the fact that Indians in Ross River had, essentially, no influence over the changes which occurred. As mentioned above, this was perceived to have had a considerable negative impact on emotional, psychological and culture health.

When contrasted with other settlements in the Yukon which have not undergone these types of rapid development, (such as Old Crow and Pelly Crossing), some noteworthy comparisons appear. First, both of these other settlements share many of the problems faced by the Indians of Ross River. However, the conditions of more gradual change have provided greater opportunity to seek solutions to problems within a context of cultural and community stability. Such was not the case in Ross River. Secondly, the development of local enterprises, while reduced, has come more from within the community than without. People in Pelly and Old Crow have been more active participants in community enterprises than Indians in Ross River. On the other hand, the Ross River Indian Band has, perhaps to a limited extent, gained greater ability to mobilize its human resources, in the last few years, to be involved in some developments. Such participation, however, is still limited to a small proportion of the Band members.

CONCLUSION

The predominant pattern of changes occurring in Ross River was generally anticipated and desired by a large proportion of the white residents of Ross River. They were changes familiar to members of the dominant Euro-Canadian culture. For such people, the boom was largely perceived as an opportunity for increased commercial activity and employment and an expansion of community infrastructure and services. While it caused them some confusion and disruption, this was largely overshadowed by the increased excitement and opportunities to get ahead.

The facilities and services which the boom drew to Ross River have improved some aspects of life for most people in the settlement. Some services were generated

as a direct result of the mining activities; some appeared indirectly because the town was growing. Some services were provided by the government as part of policies affecting all Yukon communities and were not particularly related to a mining boom.

Some of the longer-term white residents were concerned about the problems which they could see were being created for Indian people. For the most part, however, the tempo of activity in the community, and the attitudes and lack of understanding of most whites towards Indian values and lifestyles led the great bulk of the white community (particularly in-migrants), to dismiss these problems as endemic to the "Indian ways" rather than to the dynamics of the change process.

The factor which appears to warrant the most detailed analysis in this case study is that of timing. How much? How fast? are questions that need to be considered in their broadest context when the issues of social and economic development are addressed. In the case that has been outlined, it appears that, for the Indian people of Ross River, the development was too much, and too fast to allow the evolution of social and cultural mechanisms to cope with change and to allow them the opportunity to gain, economically from the development. To the white people, the boom was a period in which considerable economic opportunities could be realized. The development, occurring when and as it did, demonstrated the differences between the two segments of the community, rather than emphasizing mutual interests and potentials for mutual community gain.

When the classic question of development is asked, "Who benefits and who pays?", it appears that, in this case, the interests of mining companies have prevailed,

followed by those of a few established white entrepreneurs and in-migrants. The interests of the Indian people of Ross River were given little consideration. This order of priority is not a necessary one, however. Insights gained from case studies, such as this one, indicate that a great deal more attention should be paid to accommodating cultural differences, to regulating the rate of social change, to providing disadvantaged groups with additional resources and to developing mechanisms for distributing the benefits and costs of change more evenly among different segments of the community. It may be that the undertaking of these steps is the key to appropriate, ordered development.

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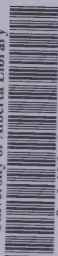
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